

## **SPORTS REPORTERS LOGBOOK - GUIDELINES FOR CANDIDATES, TRAINERS AND MARKERS**

The logbook records details of the trainee and training progress, including evidence of regular in-house assessments and a selection of cuttings, including original pictures, demonstrating that the trainee has satisfactorily covered a range of key tasks.

It must be available to the editor at all times. It is the joint responsibility of the editor and the trainee that it is kept up to date and submitted, fully completed, to the NCTJ for assessment when the trainee sits the NCE.

### **SUBMISSION**

Logbooks should be handed in to the exam organiser on NCE day. Logbooks will only be accepted after this date if they are submitted within the next seven days and are

accompanied by an acceptable explanation by the candidate's editor/trainer. This must be agreed with the NCTJ prior to the NCE.

The logbook should be submitted in the light-weight folder with labels showing the candidate's name and publication in the top right-hand corner of the front cover and on the spine.

Logbooks will be returned automatically to all candidates after the results have been issued.

### **PRESENTATION**

All logbook pages should be submitted, including any blank or incomplete. They should be clean, legible, and in the correct order.

Candidates who want to alter the information on the introductory pages or change Key Task cover page details about their stories are advised to complete new pages rather than submit ones that have information crossed out or amended. Candidates may find it advisable to make photocopies of these pages before starting the logbook in case replacements are needed later. The NCTJ can supply substitute pages to candidates upon request.

There is no need to put all the introductory and assessment pages in plastic wallets.

#### **Introductory pages**

The candidate's name, publication and NCTJ Unique Reference Number (URN) should be entered on the title page and Page 1 should be fully completed.

#### **Assessment pages**

The pages recording in-house assessments should be submitted even if some or all have not been completed. These pages are not marked as part of the NCE but their content (or lack of it) may assist examiners to judge other sections of the logbook.

## **Further comments and additions**

The Further Comments page that follows the final assessment page should be submitted even if it has been left blank.

Any letter(s) from an editor or trainer explaining deficiencies in logbook presentation or content should be inserted into the logbook after the Further Comments page.

## **Key task pages**

The Key Task cover pages should be completed and signed by the trainer. Logbooks will fail if these pages are not completed satisfactorily. Candidates have failed the logbook because they swapped cuttings but forgot to amend the cover sheets. Others have failed because trainers failed to sign them off.

The cover pages, cuttings and original copy for each Key Task should be submitted in three plastic wallets, as follows:

1. First plastic wallet containing the Key Task cover page, facing forward, and the first cutting behind it, facing back
2. Second plastic wallet containing the original copy for the first cutting, facing forward, and the second cutting behind it, facing back
3. Third plastic wallet containing the original copy for the second cutting, facing forward

This allows each cutting and its original copy to be seen facing each other.

Where additional material is required, such as the original handout for Key Task 1, it should be stapled to the appropriate original copy.

Cuttings may be pasted onto A4 paper or thin card for insertion into the plastic wallets. Photocopies of cuttings, full-size or scaled down within readable limits, will be accepted.

Candidates should ensure they submit the whole of their stories. If stories are continued from one page to another, it must be clear which cuttings go together (use additional wallets if require. If original copy covers more than one sheet of paper, sheets should be presented separately in plastic wallets.

## **CONTENT**

### **Cuttings**

Two appropriate cuttings must be submitted for each Key Task. A Key Task without one or both cuttings will result in the logbook failing.

Varied cuttings should be submitted wherever possible. Different cuttings must be submitted for each submission in the Key Task section. Cuttings must be long enough to be assessed. Stories of fewer than 80 words are unlikely to be accepted.

Cuttings do not have to be by-lined. If they carry a joint by-line, it must be clear from the accompanying original copy which parts of the published story were produced by the candidate. If it is unclear, the logbook may fail.

## **Original copy**

Each cutting must be accompanied by a print-out of the original copy as written by the candidate. Examiners will assess what candidates actually wrote and submitted for publication, not the published version. The logbook will fail if key task cuttings are submitted without a print-out, unless there is an acceptable explanation from the candidate's editor/trainer. Print-outs of subbed copy or of copy re-typed after publication will not be accepted.

Print-outs should be endorsed as original copy by the candidate's editor/trainer otherwise the logbook will fail.

Candidates who write directly to screen and whose copy is not handled by anyone else before publication should submit an explanatory letter from their editor/trainer and cuttings should be endorsed as original work. Print-outs of stories written directly to screen but then open to amendment by subs or other journalists must be accompanied by a cutting of the published version.

Print-outs of website pages will be accepted if endorsed by a candidate's editor/trainer as being original un-subbed copy published on the web.

Examiners will only accept computer failure as an excuse for missing original copy if (a) the computer problem was short-lived (b) all the missing original copy clearly relates only to the time computers were creating problems and (c) there are very good reasons why the candidate was unable to substitute fresh stories, with original copy.

Long periods of "computer failure" will not be condoned. If candidates print out original copy at the time stories are published, problems should not arise or should be rapidly identified and corrected. If regular three-monthly assessments take place, the absence of original copy should soon become apparent to trainers, and substitute stories should be found.

## **Cover sheets**

These should include headlines, publication dates and a brief explanation by the trainee of how stories were obtained and developed. It will do no harm to let examiners know that a story was self-generated, exclusive, the result of painstaking effort in the face of many obstacles, and followed up by all the nationals.

Each cover sheet must be signed by the candidate's editor/trainer. Logbooks will fail if these signatures are missing.

The sports logbook syllabus will incorporate a training programme that will be taught in the candidate's employment for a minimum of 18 months. Practical work for publication will be undertaken on a regular basis and will be assessed by a qualified senior member of staff to industry standards. The logbook will include the following categories:

### **1 Sports previews**

The candidate should produce a pre-match report around a sporting competition, looking to develop an angle through interview or analysis. Submissions can include an article drawn from a pre-season review, though ideally the article should look ahead to an upcoming contest, as well as drawing on perspective from previous matches. Two cuttings are required, with the original copy.

The candidate will be able to:

- Choose a newsworthy and relevant angle to preview a sporting contest, highlighting relevant issues.
- Write a clear, accurate and balanced sports story.
- Demonstrate sporting knowledge.

### **2 Live match reports**

The candidate will demonstrate how to write live match reports to a tight deadline about one of the more popular sports – football/ rugby/ cricket – and demonstrate knowledge of that sport. Two cuttings are required, with the original copy.

The candidate will be able to:

- Identify the relevant newsworthy points of a live match and spot the best angle.
- Write a clear, vigorous, accurate and balanced sports story to deadline.
- Demonstrate sporting knowledge.

### **3 Post-match report**

A post-match report based around interviews, analysis and comment. Often the article will be the follow-up piece to a live match report which will provide a fresh angle and demonstrate a candidate's understanding of the important issues from a game. Two cuttings are required, with the original copy. The candidate will be able to:

- Identify the key issues from a match and spot the best angle.
- Use quotes and analysis to support the angle chosen.
- Write a clear, vigorous, accurate and balanced sports story.
- Demonstrate sporting knowledge.

### **4 Handout**

The candidate will demonstrate how to develop handout material from hard copy, including press releases, emails, programme notes, fanzines and web pages. Two cuttings are required, with the original copy.

The candidate will be able to:

- Identify the relevant facts of a sports story from a written source.
- Spot the best angle.
- Follow up the story, identifying the salient facts and best quotes.
- Accurately take down and transcribe those facts and quotes.
- Write a clear, vigorous, accurate and balanced sports story.
- Demonstrate sporting knowledge.

### **5 Off-diary**

Develop contacts and produce off-diary sports stories about people or issues. Two cuttings are required, with the original copy.

The candidate will be able to:

- Develop contacts that will be the source of off-diary sports stories.
- Develop a razor-sharp news sense and recognise an off-diary sports story.
- Identify the relevant facts of a sports story from a written or verbal source.
- Spot the best angle and identify the salient facts and best quotes.
- Write a clear, vigorous, accurate and balanced sports story.
- Demonstrate sporting knowledge.

## **6 Numeracy**

Show how to develop a sports story that involves a large number of figures. Two cuttings are required, with the original copy.

The candidate will be able to:

- Identify the relevant facts and figures of a sports story from a written source.
- Prioritise which figures are relevant and interpret them without ambiguity in a story.
- Spot the best angle.
- Write a clear, vigorous, accurate and balanced sports story.
- Demonstrate sporting knowledge.

## **7 Press conference**

The candidate will demonstrate how to cover a press conference and write a report from it. Two cuttings are required, with the original copy.

The candidate will be able to:

- Identify the relevant facts from written and verbal sources at a press conference.
- Accurately take down and transcribe the relevant facts and quotes.
- Spot the best angle and write a clear, vigorous, accurate and balanced sports story.

## **8 Sports policy**

A sports news story that has a political slant involving an MP, councillor or similar figure. Two cuttings are required, with the original copy.

The candidate will be able to:

- Identify the political angle and relevant facts of a sports story from a written or verbal source.
- Accurately take down and transcribe facts and quotes where appropriate.
- Write a clear, vigorous, accurate and balanced sports story.
- Demonstrate sporting knowledge.

## **9 Community campaign**

Demonstrate how to be involved in a community sports campaign. Two cuttings are required, with the original copy.

The candidate will be able to:

- Identify an issue or person that is worthy of being the focus of a newspaper's sports campaign.
- Spot the best angle and identify the salient facts and best quotes from a written or verbal source.
- Accurately take down and transcribe those facts and quotes where appropriate.
- Write a clear, vigorous, accurate and balanced sports story.
- Demonstrate sporting knowledge.

## **10 Writing to Pictures**

The candidate will show how to think in visual terms by writing copy to accompany pictures or graphics. Two cuttings are required, with the original copy.

The candidate will be able to:

- Identify the relevant facts that should be highlighted when writing to pictures.
- Spot the best angle and identify the salient facts and best quotes.
- Accurately take down and transcribe those facts and quotes where appropriate.
- Write a clear, vigorous, accurate and balanced sports story.
- Demonstrate sporting knowledge.

## 11 Sporting interview

Develop an interview with a sports person into an in-depth feature. Two cuttings are required, with the original copy.

The candidate will be able to:

- Research the interview subject and collate facts in advance to prepare an appropriate line of questions.
- Communicate effectively with the interviewee to conduct a structured interview either face-to-face or on the phone, so the facts are gathered in the most time-efficient way.
- Obtain, recognise and select important, relevant and newsworthy facts using appropriate skills or techniques.
- Accurately take down and transcribe the relevant facts and quotes.
- Spot the best angle, identifying the salient facts and best quotes.
- Write a clear, accurate and balanced sports feature, using colour and context.
- Demonstrate sporting knowledge.

## 12 Features

The candidate will demonstrate how to write a sports feature about people or issues. This will include developing a sports story into an in-depth feature. They will look to explain a particular issue, glean facts and write from a wide variety of sources, while also analysing the issue and providing commentary. Two cuttings are required, with the original copy.

The candidate will be able to:

- Identify the relevant facts and issues of a story from a written or verbal source.
- Spot the best angle and identify the salient facts and best quotes.
- Draw on a wide variety of sources to provide facts and comment.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the issue.
- Write a clear, vigorous, accurate and balanced sports feature, that has rhythm, pace and which engages the reader.

## 13 Primary sports

Demonstrate how to write stories about one of the more popular sports – e.g. football, cricket, rugby union, rugby league – and demonstrate knowledge of that sport. There will be regional variations as to what is considered a primary sport, however for candidates the test is that this is a mainstream sport which dominates the sporting agenda in their area and for their media. Two cuttings are required, with the original copy.

The candidate will be able to:

- Identify the relevant facts of a story from a written or verbal source.
- Spot the best angle.
- Follow up the story where appropriate, identifying the salient facts and best quotes.
- Accurately take down and transcribe those facts and quotes.
- Write a clear, vigorous, accurate and balanced story.
- Demonstrate extensive sporting knowledge.

## 14 Secondary sports

The candidate should illustrate how to write stories about a number of less mainstream sports and demonstrate knowledge of those sports. There will be regional variations as to what is considered a secondary sport, but for the candidate it is one which does not dominate the sporting agenda in their area and for their media. Two cuttings are required, with the original copy.

The candidate will be able to:

- Identify the relevant facts of a story from a written or verbal source.
- Spot the best angle.

- Follow up the story where appropriate, identifying the salient facts and best quotes.
- Accurately take down and transcribe those facts and quotes.
- Write a clear, vigorous, accurate and balanced story.
- Demonstrate extensive sporting knowledge.

### **15 The Business of Sport**

Understand and develop stories involving the business of sport. This could involve financial issues off the field, as well as boardroom stories from a club. Similarly, candidates may choose to include submissions involving official sporting bodies. Two cuttings are required with the original copy.

The candidate will be able to:

- Identify and explain the keys facts of a story.
- Seek out different sources to ensure the story is balanced.
- Spot the best angle.
- Ensure the story is clear, containing the salient facts and relevant quotes.
- Demonstrate sporting and business knowledge.

### **16 Round-ups**

Demonstrate how to write one story, an accurate and comprehensive round-up of reports. Typically, this would consist of a variety of contributed match reports and results sent in from a variety of correspondents. It could also consist of previews of a particular sport. Two cuttings are required with the original copy, plus copies of the contributors' work.

The candidate will be able to:

- Identify the key facts from each contributed report.
- Spot the best angle to lead off the round-up.
- Write a clear, accurate, detailed and balanced report.
- Demonstrate sporting knowledge.

### **17 Multimedia: written and/or video reports for the web**

The candidate will need to produce written and/or video reports for the website. Multi-media stories are to be submitted on disc. Together with the candidate's published page(s) and/ or video report, the candidate must submit their original copy and any photographs or support material used to complete this task.

The candidate can produce **one or both** types of online report. The candidate must demonstrate the ability to:

- Write online stories and/or running match reports for the website. (A running report to comprise a pre-match preview, half-time score and first-half highlights, and a full-time score and full match report).
- Work with a video camera and be able to edit video rushes to produce a 30-60 second report. (Video reports can take the form of voice-over commentary, an interview, or a first-person piece to camera).

Written and video online reports must:

- Identify the relevant facts of a sports story.
- Spot the best angle.
- Follow up the story where appropriate, identifying the salient facts and best quotes.
- Produce a clear, vigorous, accurate and balanced sports story.
- Demonstrate good sporting knowledge.

## **18 Trainee's choice**

This is an opportunity for candidates to submit any two other stories, perhaps because they did not fit easily into any of the previous categories. Good submissions will be original, off diary and different. Two cuttings are required, with the original copy. Multimedia submissions are also acceptable in this category.

### **MARKING**

Logbooks are marked by senior journalists under the guidance of the NCTJ. Examiners do not assess the work of trainees they employ. They take into account at which stage of a candidate's training stories were produced and expect a higher standard from candidates at the end of their training than at the start.

Ten of the 100 marks available are awarded for presentation. The other 90 are awarded for the Key Tasks, up to five for each one. The pass mark is 60 per cent.

If the presentation or any Key Task is judged unmarkable or unacceptable, the logbook will fail regardless of the total number of marks.

Marked logbooks are subjected to rigorous moderation to ensure consistency of marking.

Exam reports are issued when logbooks fail to reach the required standard. These can be found at the front of the logbook upon its return. The Key Tasks which required attention may be resubmitted at any time. It is not normally necessary to send the whole logbook.

After each NCE the NCTJ publishes an Examiners' Report which includes advice for future candidates. This is available on the NCTJ website, and trainees are strongly urged to read it and note its recommendations.